

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

February, 2001

FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS

The February luncheon meeting is set for noon on Thursday, Feb. 15 at the Lobrano House, 312 Cue Street, Bay St. Louis.

Our guest speaker, Col. Ruffin W. Gray, USAF (Ret.) will discuss the life and career of Louis Juchereau De St. Denis, one of the 60 French Canadians brought to France in 1698 to join a force to accompany d'Iberville on his first journey to America.

Please call 467-4090 for reservations at \$6.

SOCIETY NEWS

Linda Henrie has joined the staff at Lobrano House and will be working two days each week. Because of the continued growth of the Society it became necessary to have additional help with the newsletter, the luncheons, the routine documentation of current history and responding to visitors' inquiries. We are very pleased to have Linda with us.

HELP WANTED

One additional part-time employee is needed at the Lobrano House: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., two days a week. Duties include some computer work and general office work plus ability to work with the visiting public. Telephone Charles Gray regarding salary and details.

467-4090

(Continued on page 3)



MISSISSIPPI'S ANTI-EVOLUTION LAW

Mississippi has the distinction of being one of the four states that outlawed the teaching of evolution in public schools in the 1920s. (The others were Tennessee, Arkansas and Oklahoma.)

The famous Scopes trial in Tennessee, which tested the constitutionality of its Butler Act, was an inconclusive victory for those opposed to teaching evolution, and it created a demand in other states for anti-evolution laws.

Mississippi responded to this demand with a proposed anti-evolution law, but it proved a difficult piece of legislation. The three bills introduced received unfavorable committee reports. The first, introduced in the House of Representatives by Oscar Newman

Robinson of Itawamba County, faced opposition from House Speaker Thomas L. Bailey.

But Bailey's opposition drew criticism from outside the legislature. In an open letter to the Speaker in the *Clarion Ledger* and the *Baptist Record*, T. J. Moore not only urged passage of an anti-evolution law but also for a ban on books that taught evolution.

Moore claimed that his daughter was "made a fool of" in school because of her belief in creation while her instructor taught evolution.

The bills were rejected by the House Education Committee by a vote of 10 to 4. But the vote left the door open for a minority report, which ultimately became law.

As word of the existence of the bills spread, arguments grew heated both

within and without the government.

THE DEBATES

Among arguments favoring the legislation was the following by House Committee on Education member Hugh F. Sanderson, a Missionary Baptist from Chickasaw County: "Infidels, agnostics, modernists and all the mongrel forces that intend to destroy virtue, truth and the institutions that have held together and promoted the welfare of the human race, are using our educational institutions as propaganda bureaus to bring into their ranks the children of America."

Sanderson's views were included in the minority report in which he also claimed that evolution in any variety has no intellectual value, lacks facts to sustain the theory and that, since a principle of American education is to exclude questions of religious differences from the schools, "it is a brutal injustice for the state to take the money of Christian parents and use it to propagate agnosticism, infidelity, and modernism."

THE OPPOSITION RALLIES

The outlook for passage of the bill was gloomy, but the Crusaders of America, under the leadership of Thomas Theodore Martin, Mississippi's most outspoken fundamentalist, came to Jackson and lectured in the larger Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches on the theme "Evolution in the Tax Supported Schools."

In one of his many articles carried in the press, Martin wrote, "What is the soul of one Mississippi boy or girl worth?" and "Shall the Mississippi legislature cringe before the ridicule of evolutionists and their sympathizers?" "Shall the legislature of Mississippi barter the souls of Mississippi children for gold?"

THE LAW PASSES

On the 24th day of the 1926 legislative session, the bill passed the house with 76 yeas, 32 nays and 32 absent or not voting. The senate

approved the house version 29 to 16, and Gov. Henry L. Whitfield signed it. The final bill read: "that it shall be unlawful for any teacher or other instructor in any university, college, or institution of the state which is supported in whole or part from public funds...to teach that mankind ascended or descended from a lower order of animals."

Anyone convicted of violating the law would be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500 and loss of his teaching position.

One legislator, D. K. Windham of Prentiss County submitted an amendment aimed at ridiculing the whole business:

Violators "upon conviction shall suffer death by burning at the stake, it being the purpose to this act to sanction and reinstate the 'auto da fe,' the Spanish Inquisition, and Calvinism." Windham was ruled out of order.

Sen. William Winter of Grenada proposed a substitute bill that would make it "unlawful to teach disrespect for the Holy Bible, or teach that ours is an inferior form of government." His motion was tabled, since it did not deal with evolution.

MAN BEFORE MONKEYS?

James H. Skewes, editor of the *Meridian Star*, the largest newspaper in the state, wrote five editorials opposing the bill. In one, Skewes offered a way out for the legislators:

He told of an African legend that explained where monkeys came from. The legend stated that monkeys were once men who owed money, ran into trees when they could not pay, and never came down. "Why bother to place a legislative ban on teaching monkey-to-man evolution when we can settle the whole problem and please everybody (except the monkeys) by compelling our teachers to teach that monkeys have descended from man?" He called his idea "a simple, satisfactory, delightfully respectable and intellectually conclusive solution."

"The thing to do is to enact a

IN MEMORIAM

MARGARET "MICKEY" BEYER
BURNS 1934 - 2001

JEANNE KRUSE WARNER
1919 - 2001

Mississippi law to COMPEL everybody in Mississippi to believe that his or her fore-mama and fore-papa hung by his or her caudal appendage in the jungle tree tops and then nobody will believe it. And that we presume is the end to be attained," Skewes wrote.

When ridicule got him nowhere, Skewes shifted to blasting the legislators:

"The Mississippi Senate joins the Mississippi House in enacting an anti-evolution measure to make a monkey out of Mississippi...they seem to have hypnotized themselves into the belief that Almighty God needs their puny legislative feats in His defense."

LACK OF ENFORCEMENT

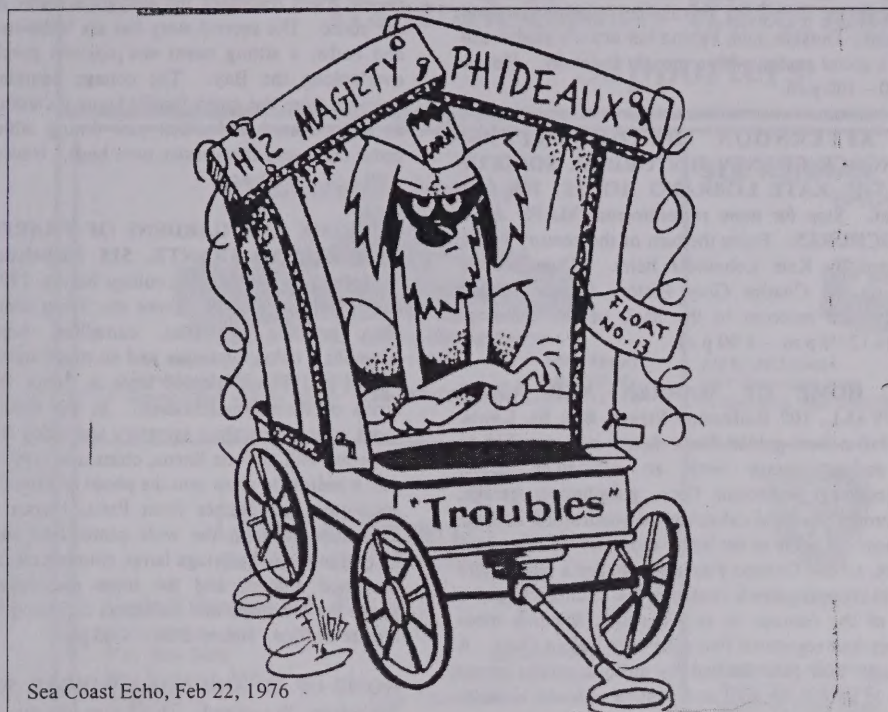
Mississippi Attorney General Rush Hightower Knox showed little interest in enforcing the new law, nor apparently did any of his successors.

But the law stayed on the statute books for 44 years until it was struck down in December 1970 by the Mississippi Supreme Court on the grounds of an earlier U.S. Supreme Court decision that the Arkansas law violated the First Amendment.

In the 1970s and 1980s fundamentalists would attempt to get laws passed giving equal time to creationism along with evolution.

Reference:

Curtis, Christopher K., "Mississippi's Anti-Evolution Law of 1926," *The Journal of Mississippi History*, February 1986.



Sea Coast Echo, Feb 22, 1976

MARDI GRAS FROM PRE-HISTORY TO NOW

Mardi Gras is a celebration older than Christianity itself. Its beginning goes back to those prehistoric days when ancient Greece was as yet only nomad tribes of shepherds.

Among these pagan peoples it was a Spring sacrificial festival, in which the villagers thanked their gods for the fertility of their land, their animals and their women.

As this rustic custom was absorbed by the magnificent empires of Greece and Rome it was expanded and corrupted into a day of licentiousness and lust until it was finally tempered, tamed and timed by the early Christian Church as the last day of indulgence in wine and food and revelry – the final farewell to flesh before the Lenten Season.

It followed the Church throughout Europe and became one of the most eagerly awaited annual celebrations of Italy, France and even England.

Mardi Gras in America was first celebrated in 1699 here on the Gulf Coast by d'Iberville and several companions who had left Old Biloxi (Ocean Springs) on an exploration trip.

On Mardi Gras day they found themselves in a lonely bayou which they named Bayou Mardi Gras. This ceremony and a drink of wine around was the extent of the festivities – but even in the midst of an unexplored and dangerous wilderness Frenchmen could not forget their “farewell to flesh.”

Thenceforth, under ten flags, the annual observance of this ancient holiday in New Orleans, the Carnival Capital of the U.S., in Mobile, the Mother of the

Mistick Krewees, and in Biloxi, whose founders brought it to our shores, has developed into one of the nation's most popular attractions.

(From *Down South*, February 1960)

(Society from page 1)

Dora and Don Miller donated a portfolio of photographs of “Antebellum Homes of the Gulf Coast” by David King Gleason. Among them is a beautiful photograph of the Spanish Custom House. For those who might not be familiar with this building located at 708 South Beach Boulevard, it was built in 1787 of bricks baked on the site.

Dorothy and Don Brown have begun refurbishing the old Woodmen of the World building (The Antique Arcade) next to Cedar Rest Cemetery. This is a wonderful building and is visible the full length of Court Street. We are thrilled to see this work being done. Charles Gray

NEW MEMBERS

Mike Zuppardo, Bay Saint Louis, MS
Eileen Guthrie, Pass Christain, MS
Ruby Sievers, Pass Christian, Ms
Mary Ellis, Gulfport, MS

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY	8 a.m.
through	to
FRIDAY	4 p.m.

THE

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*Spring Pilgrimage***BAY ST. LOUIS AND WAVELAND**

Thursday, March 15th 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Chairmen: Lee Purcel and

Co-Chair: Cindy Villars

Hostesses: Bay-Waveland Garden Club

1. HEADQUARTERS; HISTORIC BAY ST. LOUIS, DEPOT, 1928 Depot Way. Make this your first stop for light refreshments, **MAPS AND BROCHURES** of today's tour. Designated as a Mississippi Landmark, the Depot will host a transportation display. Enjoy Stennis's NASA exhibit of space ships as well. Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Note: Open Hours vary by site.

2. CELESTINE AND VERONICA LABAT, 307 Easterbrook, Bay Saint Louis. Celestine, born in 1898, and her sister Veronica are living treasures of Bay St. Louis. Their father, Papa Joe, build St. Rose de Lima and many other churches and houses in the area. He added onto their Colonial revival home in 1892 doubling its size. Antiques dating from the 1800's furnish this home which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Don't miss the four-poster bed, family portraits and the bronze bust of another sister done by Creole artist Richmond Barthe. Hours: 11:00 - 1:00 p.m.

3. HOME OF ELIZABETH VEGLIA AND BILLY RAY SANDERS, 209 N. Second street, Bay St. Louis. This home built c. 1915 features mosaic pieces by Elizabeth and her mother Cecile as well as many of their artist friends. Elizabeth designed the kitchen tile with the period of the house in mind and in the master bath she has

incorporated fine-china shards into a pattern around the sink. Outside, look behind her artist's studio and find a secret garden with a mosaic fountain. Hours: 11:00 - 1:00 p.m.

4. AFTERNOON HEADQUARTERS: HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE, 108 Cue Street. Stop for more refreshments, **MAPS AND BROCHURES.** Enjoy the turn of the century house donated by Kate Lobrano's heirs. Then browse through the Charles Gray History Center's small library and museum in the back of the building. Hours 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

5. HOME OF WARREN AND VICKI STOVALL, 107 Ballentine Street, Bay St. Louis. In 1945 a front-gabled frame house was attached to an earlier cottage with an off-center gable. Subsequently a second floor, guesthouse, garage, swimming pool and cabana have quadrupled its size. Chinese red walls in the living room set off heart pine floors, a New Orleans Plantation butler's pantry and an old chopping block centering the kitchen are just a few of the features to see. Outside, Spanish moss drapes four registered live oaks- the Talbot Oaks. A wrought iron gate flanked by antique swans opens onto the swimming pool and cabana. Hours 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

6. HOME AND COTTAGE OF THE GREEN FAMILY, 418 and 420 South Beach Boulevard, Bay St. Louis. This House of the Future featuring electricity at the New Orleans Worlds Fair of 1884, was dismantled in 1906 and floated on a barge to Bay St. Louis where it was purchased by John A. & Mary Jane Green. The parlor features triple crown molding and windows of three styles and has been furnished with family pieces. An octagonal-shaped

dining room resonates the polygonal front of the house. The second story has six bedrooms and baths, a sitting room and upstairs porch overlooking the Bay. The cottage contains antiques from the green family home including an antique card table, lion paw dining table, cedar chest and four-poster twin beds. Hours: 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

7. HOME AND GARDENS OF PHARES AND ELINOR FRANTZ, 515 Nicholson, Waveland. This engaging cottage built c. 1922 has a glorious garden. From the living room view azaleas, sasanquas, camellias, huge magnolias, oaks, cypresses and so much more. Phares and Elinor planted trees to honor the births of their grandchildren. In the dining room notice the walnut secretary and enjoy the table set with antique linens, china and crystal. Ask a hostess to show you the photo of Elinor's great-great grandfather from Paris, France - Leon Fremaux. In the wide center hall take delight in the old carriage lamp, chiming clock, rosewood armoire, and the brass chandelier. Study the old maps and paintings that hang in Phares's office. Hours: 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

HOME OF ED AND NORA WIKOFF, 500 Nicholson, Waveland. This house was one of four created by the division of the old Uhlman Woolen Mill after it closed in the late 1800's. Now, Ed and Nora, an architect and interior designer, have created an inviting place to raise their four children. Look for the grandfather clock from Ed's family and the armoire from Nora's great-grandmother. See the 50's pottery, Mission style rocker, bookcase in the family room and the workman's bed in the master bedroom.

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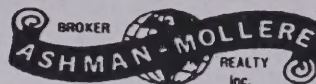
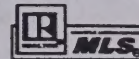
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